1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

They make square houses.[1] Panelled doors and glass windows, deck-chairs and palm furniture are becoming more and more popular. The men wear long Moslem robes and the women are clothed in cotton. In the rural areas there are usually a few craftsmen who still ply their trades as carpenters and blacksmiths, though the latter no longer smelt, but use scrap-iron.

Labour Migration

Statistics are not available for the Yao of Portuguese East Africa or Tanganyika Territory. Yao constitute 34 per cent. of the total population of South Nyasa district, 15 per cent. of upper Shire, 11 per cent. of Blantyre and Zomba.[2] The proportion of labour migrants in these districts was in 1937 as follows:[3]

District	Adult males fit to work	Percentage of emigrants	Number producing economic crops	Number of subsistence producers	Emigrants not heard of since 1937[4]
South Nyasa	24,230	97·1	2,910 (12%)	19,005 (79%)	873
Upper Shire	24,873	12·9	2,333 (10%)	18,849 (87%)	253
Blantyre	25,330	12·6	3,788 (15%)	19,185 (80%)	986
Zomba	18,879	10·4	3,790 (20%)	9,040 (72%)	211

South Nyasa district, which is unfertile waterless bush with a long history of famine and food shortage, has the highest proportion of labour migrants. Upper Shire, though not fertile, is more prosperous, benefiting from the tobacco- and cotton-growing industries, and from the dried-fish trade.[5]

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE[6]

Kinship and Local Grouping

Among the Yao succession is matrilineal and marriage mainly matrilocal. According to some informants succession formerly passed down the line of brothers, as with the Bemba, but it now passes direct to the eldest sister's eldest son, or to descendants of other sisters in order of seniority.[7] Chiefly succession follows the same rule, but the most senior may be set aside for a more suitable candidate.[8]

Clan names, *mbumba*, are inherited matrilineally, and formerly designated exogamous units,[9] but the marriage prohibition has now ceased to operate. Holders of the same clan name are unable to trace descent from a common ancestress, and for commoners clan names seem to have quite lost their significance; they are, however, carefully remembered in the chiefly lines and in other lines of hereditary rank, such as village headmen.

Within the general kinship grouping of the clan, a smaller group is recognized,

[1] Warren, 1908, p. 121; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 20-2, describes a round hut.

[2] 1931 Census information is taken because the district boundaries were changed between 1931 and 1945, so that the information in the 1945 Census would not be susceptible of comparison with that given in the 1937 Survey of Male Adult Population in the *Bell Report*, Appendix A.

[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A. [4] Smith, 1937.

[5] Information, unless otherwise stated, is from Mitchell, and relates to south Nyasaland Yao.

[6] Johnston, 1897, p. 471; Meredith Sanderson, 1900, p. 330. Cf. Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 183, who says that headmen inherit before sister's son.

[7] Ibid., p. 189. [8] Swanson, c. 1900, p. 256.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

crops grown in their gardens. For their other wants they need cash, and they obtain it either by the sale of their agricultural produce, by trading with their fellows, or by seeking work either within or outside the area. The sale of agricultural produce is probably the most important. A few Africans earn a small living as blacksmiths, bicycle repairers, diviners and leeches, fish pedlars and tailors. There are some African canteen or small shop owners, but this field is dominated by the Indians, who between them have a few dozen village and roadside stores.

A certain amount of money is sent or brought home by labour migrants. I could not estimate how much this is for each household. It cannot be very high on the average, because not a great proportion is working at labour centres outside the area of study.[1] Within the Territory there are few opportunities of earning wages. In Jalasi's area there are one or two White tobacco estates, which employ at the most a few hundred labourers, and a number of Indian storekeepers who may between them employ a hundred men. Otherwise the Government itself, through the Agriculture Department in particular, may employ a hundred or more labourers. There are more opportunities south of Chikala and in the densely populated Malemia area where a considerable number are employed in the neighbouring township, Zomba, and on the surrounding estates. The cash income per adult, male and female, in the area where this study was made probably does not exceed £40 to £50 per annum, and the Yao rely mainly on the sale of their own produce to earn this amount.

[1] I estimate from genealogies that about 22 per cent of the men over the age of 18 were at labour centres in 1947-8. Table 3 of the 1945 Census shows that, excluding those in the Army, 28 per cent of the men over the age of 18 were away from Liwonde and Fort Johnston districts when the census was taken.

believes that she will die. The man's representatives are therefore able to establish the child's paternity from the birth-pang confessions of the woman.

The child is kept in the hut where it was born, for six or seven days, while the umbilical cord dries and falls off. During this time (*kwili*) the child is unnamed, and it is named only when it is taken out of the hut. Should it die during this period of seclusion it remains unnamed and is referred to by a special term (*ilinye*, pl. *matepe*). I have therefore been able to enumerate live births by means of the distinction made between miscarriages and still-births (*kwesenge*) and children who lived long enough to be referred to as *matepe*. After the birth of the child the woman may not have intercourse for four or five months. To do so would be to endanger the life of the child with a disease called *ndoka*,[1] which is contracted by a sexually inactive person when he comes into contact with a sexually active person. The husband may have intercourse with a second wife, but must take care to medicate himself so that he does not endanger the life of his child. When the child is about 4 or 5 months of age the parents perform *ritual* intercourse and medicate the child against the mystical dangers of sexual activity; sexual relations are then resumed.

The Yao say that a second child should not be born while the first is still being suckled. Since lactation continues for about two years I am uncertain whether monogynists remain continent, as they say they do, or whether *coitus interruptus* is practised. It is quite usual for husbands to become labour migrants when their children are still very young. I have known women to write to their husbands who are away working and tell them to return because their children have 'grown', i.e. have been weaned. Labour *recruiters* had difficulty in recruiting men immediately after the soldiers had been demobilized at the end of the war, because the women objected, saying that they had remained childless long enough and the men must first wait until children were born. However, actual examination of birth-dates shows that children are sometimes born within a year of one another and sometimes there are quite big gaps. The two-year gap between children is probably an ideal which few attain.

3. The Estimation of Fertility

(a) *Sundbarg's Age Division*

As a preliminary estimate of fertility, Sundbarg's trichotomy of ages may be considered. The argument behind this division of the population into Youth, Middle Age, and Old Age is that those populations with a high proportion of youth have a greater tendency to increase. Table V shows this trichotomy for the Yao with the same material for some other populations shown for comparison. Where the gross reproduction-rate is known for the period shown in the table, this is included.

At any one time a certain proportion of the population is absent from the area, usually at some labour centre. Hence the proportions of the population are distributed abnormally. In all there appeared to be a total of sixty-three men, women, and children absent from the hamlets, who would otherwise have been living there. Hence in Table V these have been included in the totals in the 'Yao with absentees' proportions.

[1] A disease of this sort is believed in by many Central African tribes. Among the Nyanja-speaking peoples it is known as *chimpele*.